Rules of Chess

ERIC SCHILLER

THE OFFICIAL RULES OF CHESS

The following are the standard rules of chess as applied in World Championship competition. In later chapter we present some of the variations of the rules used in amateur, scholastic, and online competitions. These rules conform in most part to those of the world chess federation (FIDE), but differ significantly from those found in American tournaments conducted under the auspices of the United States Chess Federation. Since most American tournaments are amateur events, those rules are discussed in the section on amateur rules.

This set of rules was composed by International Arbiter Eric Schiller, with the cooperation and valuable assistance of International Arbiters Andrzej Filipowicz (Poland) and Yuri Averbakh (Russia). They were used verbatim in the 2000 Braingames.net World Chess Championship and were personally approved by World Champion Garry Kasparov and his challenger Vladimir Kramnik. Additional advice was provided by Lothar Schmid of Germany, the International Arbiter who oversaw the Fischer vs. Spassky matches in 1972 and 1992.

SCOPE

The Laws of Chess cannot cover all possible situations that may arise during a game. The Arbiter's judgment will apply when there is no specific rule available.

RULES OF PLAY

Article 1: The Nature & Objectives of the Game of Chess

1.1. The game of chess is played between two opponents who move pieces alternately on a square board called a *chessboard*. The player who has control of the white pieces (White) starts the game. A player is said to 'have the move', when the opponent's move has been completed.

1.2. The objective of each player is to arrive at a position such that the opponent's king has no legal move which would avoid the capture of the king on the following move. This situation is called

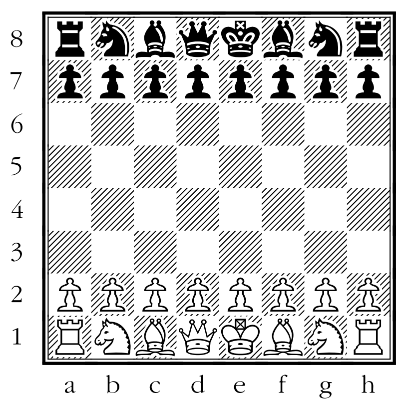
checkmate and the player who checkmates his opponent wins the game. The player who has been checkmated loses the game.

Article 2: The Initial Position of the Pieces on the Chessboard

2.1. The chessboard is composed of an 8 x 8 grid of 64 equal alternating light and dark squares. The chessboard is placed between the players in such a way that the near corner square to the right of the player is a light square.

2.2. At the beginning of the game one player has 16 light-colored pieces (the *white* pieces); the other has 16 dark-colored pieces (the *black* pieces). Each side has one king, one queen, two rooks, two bishops, two knights and eight pawns.

2.3. The initial position of the pieces on the chessboard is as follows where the following symbols represent the pieces: ♟= pawn, ♞ = knight, ♝= bishop, ♜ = rook, ♛= queen, ♚= king:



2.4. The eight vertical columns of squares are referred to as *files*. The eight horizontal rows of squares are referred to as *ranks*. A straight line of squares of the same color, touching corner to corner, is referred to as a *diagonal*.

Article 3: The Moves of the Pieces

3.1. No piece can be moved to a square occupied by a piece of the same color (white or black). If a piece moves to a square occupied by an opponent's piece the latter is captured and removed from the chessboard as part of the same move. A piece is said to *attack* a

square if the piece could move to that square on the next turn and capture an opponent's piece if one occupies the square.

3.2. (a) The queen moves to any square along the file, the rank or a diagonal on which it stands.

(b) The rook moves to any square along the file or the rank on which it stands.

(c) The bishop moves to any square along a diagonal on which it stands.

When making these moves the queen, rook or bishop cannot move over any intervening pieces.

3.3. The knight moves to one of the squares nearest to that on which it stands but not on the same rank, file or diagonal.

3.4. The pawn has five legal moves:

(a) The pawn moves forward to the unoccupied square immediately in front of it on the same file

(b) On its first move each pawn may advance two squares along the same file provided both squares are unoccupied

(c) The pawn moves to a square occupied by an opponent's piece which is diagonally in front of it on an adjacent file, capturing that piece.

(d) A pawn attacking a square crossed by an opponent's pawn which has advanced two squares in one move from its original square may capture this opponent's pawn as though the latter had been moved only one square. This capture can be made only on the move following this advance and is called an 'en passant' capture.

(e) When a pawn reaches the rank furthest from its starting position it must be exchanged as part of the same move for a queen, rook, bishop or knight of the same color. The player's choice is not restricted to pieces that have been captured previously. This exchange of a pawn for another piece is called 'promotion' and the effect of the new piece is immediate. If the desired piece is not physically available, the player should summon the arbiter, who will provide the piece. Alternatively, the player may use an inverted rook to represent a queen, or may lay the pawn on its side and verbally indicate which piece it represents. If an arbiter is present, the arbiter should replace the inverted rook or pawn with a queen.

3.5. The king can move in two different ways, by:

(a) moving to any adjoining square that is not attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces, provided that the king is not in check

at the conclusion of the move. The king is said to be in *check*, if it is under attack by one or more of the opponent's pieces, even if those opposing pieces cannot themselves move.

(b) *Castling* This is a move of the king and either rook of the same color on the same rank, counting as a single move of the king and executed as follows: the king is transferred from its original square two squares towards the rook, then that rook is transferred over the king to the square the king has just crossed.

Castling is illegal in the following situations:

[i] if the king has already been moved.

[ii] with a rook that has already been moved.

[iii] while the square on which the king stands, or the square which it must cross, or the square which it is to occupy, is attacked by one or more of the opponent's pieces.

[iv] while there is any piece between the king and the rook with which castling is to be effected.

Article 4: The Act of Moving the Pieces

4.1. Each move must be made with one hand only.

4.2. Provided that he first expresses the intention (e.g. by saying *adjust*), the player having the move may adjust one or more pieces on their squares.

4.3. Except as provided in Article 4.2, if the player having the move deliberately touches one or more of either player's pieces on the chessboard, the first piece touched must be moved or captured, if the resulting move is legal. If a player touches one piece belonging to each side, the opponent's piece must be captured using the player's own touched piece, or, if this is illegal, move or capture the first piece touched which can be moved or captured. If it is unclear, the player's own piece shall be considered to have been touched before the opponent's.

4.4. (a) If a player deliberately touches the king and a rook he must castle on that side if it is legal.

(b) If a player deliberately touches a rook and then the king he is not allowed to castle on that side on that move and the situation shall be governed by Article 4.3.

(c) If a player intending to castle, touches the king or king and a rook at the same time, but castling on that side is illegal, the player must choose either to castle on the other side, provided that castling

on that side is legal, or to move the king. If the king has no legal move, the player is free to make any legal move.

4.5. If none of the pieces touched can be moved or captured, the player may make any legal move.

4.6. If the opponent violates Article 4.3 or 4.4, the player cannot claim this after he himself deliberately touches a piece.

4.7. When a piece has been released on a square, it cannot then be moved to another square, and the turn is completed. The move is considered to be made when all the relevant requirements of Article 3 have been fulfilled.

Article 5: The Completed Game

5.1. (a) The game is won by the player who has checkmated the opponent's king with a legal move. This immediately ends the game.

(b) The game is won by the player whose opponent *resigns*. Resignation takes place when the opponent either verbally informs the player by saying "I resign" or who indicates resignation on the scoresheet by...

[I] Writing the word "resigns" in the space which would normally hold the move to be played.

[ii] Circling the appropriate result.

[iii] Writing "0-1" (in the case that White is resigning) or "1-0" (in the case the Black is resigning) and signs the scoresheet. This immediately ends the game.

5.2. The game is drawn when the player to move has no legal move and the king is not in check. The game is said to end in *stalemate.* This immediately ends the game.

5.3. The game is drawn upon agreement between the two players during the game. This immediately ends the game. (See Article 9.1)

5.4. The game may be drawn if the identical position is about to appear or has appeared on the chessboard three times. (See Article 9.2)

5.5. The game may be drawn if the last 50 consecutive moves have been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without the capture of any piece. (See Article 9.3)

TOURNAMENT RULES

Article 6: The Chess Clock

6.1. A chess *clock* is a device with two time displays, connected to each other in such a way that only one of them can run at one time. *Clock* in the Laws of Chess means one of the two time displays. *Expiration* means the expiry of the allotted time for a player.

6.2. When using a chess clock, each player must make a certain number or all moves in an allotted period of time; or may be allocated an additional amount of time after each move. The time saved by a player during one period is added to the time available for the next period, except in the *incremental* mode. In the *incremental* mode both players receive an allotted *primary thinking time.* They also receive a *fixed extra time* for every move. The count down of the main time only commences after the fixed time has expired. Provided the player stops the clock before the expiry of the fixed time, the main thinking time does not change, irrespective of the proportion of the fixed time used.

6.3. Each chess clock has a device which indicates when time has expired.

6.4. The arbiter or tournament director determines where the chess clock is placed. In the absence of relevant authority, the clock is placed on the right side of the board, from the perspective of the player of the Black pieces.

6.5. At the time determined for the start of the game the clock of the player who has the white pieces is started by the black player.

6.6. The player shall lose the game if he arrives at the chessboard more than one hour after the scheduled start of the session.

6.7. (a) During the game each player, having made the move on the chessboard, shall stop the clock controlling the player's time and start the opponent's clock. A player must always be allowed to stop the clock. The move is not considered to have been completed until he has done so, unless the made move ends the game. (See Articles 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3)

The time between making the move on the chessboard and stopping the clock and starting the opponent's clock is regarded as part of the time allotted to the player.

(b) A player must stop the clock with the same hand as that with which he made the move. It is forbidden for either player to obstruct the access of the opponent to the clock.

(c) The players must handle the chess clock gently. It is forbidden to punch it forcibly, to pick it up or to knock it over. Improper clock handling shall be penalized in accordance with Article 13.4.

6.8. Expiration of the time control occurs when the arbiter observes the fact or when a valid claim to that effect has been made by either player.

6.9. Except where Articles 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 apply, if a player does not complete the prescribed number of moves in the allotted time, the game is lost by the player. However, the game is drawn, if the position is such that the opponent cannot checkmate the player by any possible series of legal moves.

6.10. Every indication given by the clocks is considered to be conclusive in the absence of any evident defect. A chess clock with an evident defect shall be replaced. The arbiter shall use best judgment when determining the times to be shown on the replacement chess clock.

6.11. If the clock in use allows both expiration of time on both sides, and it is impossible to establish which player's time expired first, the game shall continue.

6.12. (a) If the game needs to be interrupted, the arbiter shall stop the clocks.

(b) A player may stop the clocks in order to seek the arbiter's assistance.

(c) The arbiter shall decide when the game is to be restarted.

6.13. If an irregularity occurs and/or the pieces have to be restored to a previous position, the arbiter shall determine the times to be shown on the clocks, using the best evidence at available.

6.14. Devices and displays showing the current position on the chessboard, the moves and the number of moves made, and clocks which also show the number of moves, are allowed in the playing hall. However, these devices are not to be considered conclusive evidence in support of any claim, and remain at all times unofficial.

Article 7: Illegal Positions

7.1. (a) If during a game it is found that the initial position of the pieces was incorrect, the game shall be canceled and a new game played.

(b) If during a game it is found that the only error is that the chessboard has been placed contrary to Article 2.1, the game con-

tinues but the position reached must be transferred to a correctly placed chessboard.

7.2. If a game has begun with colors reversed then it shall continue, unless the arbiter rules otherwise.

7.3. If a player displaces one or more pieces, that player shall re-establish the correct position while the player's clock is running. If necessary the opponent has the right to restart the player's clock without making a move in order to make sure the player re-establishes the correct position on his or her own time.

7.4. If during a game it is found that an illegal move has been made, or that pieces have been displaced from their squares, the position before the irregularity shall be re-instated. If the position immediately before the irregularity cannot be identified, the game shall continue from the last identifiable position prior to the irregularity. The clocks shall be adjusted according to Article 6.13 and, in the case of an illegal move, Article 4.3 applies to the move replacing the illegal move. The game shall then continue.

Article 8: The Recording of the Moves

8.1. In the course of play each player is required to record all moves by both players, move after move, as clearly and legibly as possible, in the algebraic notation (Appendix E), on the scoresheet prescribed for the competition.

A player may reply to the opponent's move before recording it, but must record that move before making a reply to the opponent's next move.. The offer of a draw must be recorded on the scoresheet by both players.(Appendix E.12) If a player due to physical or religious reasons, is unable to keep score, an amount of time, decided by the arbiter, shall be deducted from the allotted time at the beginning of the game, and an assistant may be supplied to record the game.

8.2. The entire scoresheet shall be made available to the arbiter at any time.

8.3. The scoresheets are the exclusive property of the organizers of the event.

8.4. If a player has less than five minutes left on the clock and does not have additional time of 30 seconds or more added with each move, then the player is not obliged to meet the requirements of Article 8.1. Immediately after one side's time has expired the player

must update the scoresheet completely.

8.5. (a) If neither player is required to keep score under Article 8.4, the arbiter or an assistant should attempt to keep score. In this case, immediately after one flag has fallen, the arbiter shall stop the clocks. Then both players shall update their scoresheets, using the arbiter's or the opponent's scoresheet.

(b) If only one player is not required to keep score under Article 8.4, that player must update the scoresheet completely as soon as time has expired in any given time control. Provided it is the player's move, access to opponent's scoresheet is permitted upon request. The player is not permitted to move until after he has completed the scoresheet and returned the opponent's, if it was consulted.

(c) If no complete scoresheet is available, the players must reconstruct the game on a second chessboard under the control of the arbiter or an assistant, who shall first record the actual game position before reconstruction takes place. Notation recorded by demonstration devices may be used to help with the reconstruction.

8.6. If the scoresheets cannot be brought up to date showing that a player has overstepped the allotted time, the next move made shall be considered as the first of the following time period, unless there is evidence that more moves have been made.

Article 9: The Drawn Game

9.1. A player can propose a draw after making a move on the chessboard. This must be done before stopping the clock and starting the opponent's clock. An offer at any other time during play is still valid, but Article 12.5 must be considered. No conditions can be attached to the offer. In both cases the offer cannot be withdrawn and remains valid until the opponent accepts it, rejects it orally, rejects it by making a move, or the game is concluded in some other way.

The offer may be made either orally or by means of a device (see 9.7). Oral offers may be made by any reasonable means which clearly indicate the offer, for example:

[i] "I offer you a draw"
[ii] "Would you like a draw?"
[iii] "Draw?"
[iv] "Remis?" (pronounced Ray-mee)
[v] "Nichya?" (pronounced Nee-chya)

The offer of a draw shall be noted by each player on the scoresheet with the symbol (=).

9.2. The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by the player having the move, when the same position, for at least the third time (not necessarily by repetition of moves)...

(a) is about to appear, if the player first writes the move on the scoresheet and declares to the arbiter the intention to make this move.

(b) has just appeared.

Positions as in (a) and (b) are considered the same, if the same player has the move, pieces of the same kind and color occupy the same squares, and the possible moves of all the pieces of both players are the same. Positions are not the same if a pawn could have been captured en passant or if the right to castle immediately or in the future has been changed.

9.3. The game is drawn, upon a correct claim by the player having the move, if

(a) the player writes on the scoresheet, and declares to the arbiter the intention to make a move which shall result in the last 50 moves having been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without the capture of any piece, or

(b) the last 50 consecutive moves have been made by each player without the movement of any pawn and without the capture of any piece.

9.4. If the player makes a move without having claimed the draw, the right to claim a draw on that move per Article 9.2 or 9.3, is lost.

9.5. If a player claims a draw as in Article 9.2 or 9.3 the player shall immediately stop both clocks. The player is not allowed to withdraw the claim.

(a) If the claim is found to be correct the game is immediately drawn.

(b) If the claim is found to be incorrect, the arbiter shall deduct half of the claimant's remaining time up to a maximum of three minutes and add three minutes to the opponent's remaining time. Then the game shall continue and the intended move must be made.

9.6. The game is drawn when a position is reached from which a checkmate cannot occur by any possible series of legal moves, even with the most unskilled play (except as per article 10, where applicable). This immediately ends the game.

9.7 A *draw flag* may be used to offer a draw. A draw flag is a device which, when is activated by a player, raises a physical flag or makes visible in some way the offer of the draw to players and arbiters. The organizers may require the use of a draw flag in addition to or in place of the oral offer of a draw.

Article 10: Sudden Death Finish

10.1. A *Sudden Death* finish is the last phase of a game, when all the remaining moves must be made in a limited time with no time increment.

10.2. If the player has less than two minutes left on the clock, the player may claim a draw before the expiration of time by stopping the clocks and summon the arbiter.

(a) If the arbiter is satisfied the opponent is making no effort to win the game by normal means, or that it is not possible to win by normal means, then he shall declare the game drawn. Otherwise he shall postpone the decision.

(b) If the arbiter postpones the decision, the opponent may be awarded two extra minutes thinking time and the game shall continue in the presence of the arbiter.

(c) Having postponed the decision, the arbiter may subsequently declare the game drawn, even after time has expired on one player's clock.

10.3. Illegal moves do not necessarily lose. After the action taken under Article 7.4, for a first illegal move by a player, the arbiter shall give two minutes extra time to the opponent; for a second illegal move by the same player, the arbiter shall give another two minutes extra time to the opponent; for a third illegal move by the same player, the arbiter shall declare the game lost by the player who played incorrectly.

10.4. If the clock shows that time has expired for both players and it is impossible to establish which flag fell first, the game is drawn.

Article 11: Scoring

11.1. A player who wins the game scores one point (1), a player who loses the game scores no points (0) and a player who draws the game scores a half point (1/2).

Article 12: The Conduct of the Players

12.1. High standards of etiquette are expected of the players.

12.2. During play the players are forbidden to make use of any notes, sources of information, advice, or to analyze on another chessboard. The scoresheet shall be used only for recording the moves, the times of the clocks, the offer of a draw, and matters relating to a claim.

12.3. No analysis is permitted in the playing room when play is in progress, whether by players or spectators.

12.4. The players are not allowed to leave the *competition area* without permission from the arbiter. The competition area is defined as the playing area, rest rooms, refreshment area, area set aside for smoking and other places as designated by the arbiter. The player having the move is not allowed to leave the playing area without permission of the arbiter.

12.5. It is forbidden to distract or annoy the opponent in any manner whatsoever; this includes the persistent offer of a draw.

12.6. Infraction of any part of the Articles 12.2 to 12.5 shall lead to penalties in accordance with Article 13.4.

12.7. The game is lost by a player who persistently refuses to comply with the Laws of Chess. The opponent's score shall be decided by the arbiter.

12.8. If both players are found guilty according to Article 12.7, the game shall be declared lost by both players.

Article 13: The Role of the Arbiter

13.1. The arbiter shall see that the Laws of Chess are strictly observed.

13.2. The arbiter shall act in the best interest of the competition. The arbiter should ensure that a good playing environment is maintained and that the players are not disturbed.

13.3. The arbiter shall observe the games, especially when the players are short of time, enforce decisions he has made and impose penalties on players where appropriate.

13.4. Penalties open to the arbiter include:

(a) A warning.

(b) Increasing the remaining time of the opponent.

(c) Reducing the remaining time of the offending player.

(d) Declaring the game to be lost.

(e) Expulsion from the event.

13.5. The arbiter may award either or both players additional time in the event of external disturbance of the game.

13.6. The arbiter must not intervene in a game to indicate the number of moves made, except in applying Article 8.5, when at least one player has used all the allotted time. The arbiter shall refrain from informing a player that the opponent has made a move, or that he has failed to press the clock. The arbiter intervenes after one player's time has expired to require updating of scoresheets, if necessary.

13.7. Spectators and players in other games are not to speak about or otherwise interfere in a game. If necessary, the arbiter may expel offenders from the playing room.

13.8. The ruling of the arbiter may be appealed after the game has concluded by making a written request to the tournament director before the start of the following round, but not later than 2 hours following the conclusion of the game. A deposit may be required by the tournament director. If the ruling of the arbiter is upheld, the deposit may be forfeited in the case that the appeals committee decides that the appeal did not have sufficient basis. If the ruling of the arbiter is modified in any way, the deposit shall be returned promptly.

Article 14: The Role of the Tournament Director

14.1. The tournament director is responsible for all pairings and organizational matters not explicitly belonging to the arbiter.

14.2 The tournament director is responsible for insuring proper lighting and conditions in the playing area, access to refreshments, rest room facilities and displays of information pertaining to the event.

CHESS NOTATION

This section of the rules provides a technical description of the chess notation system as required during play.

E1. Each piece is indicated by an abbreviation. English language values are:

King	K
Queen	Q
Rook	R
Bishop	B
Knight	N
Pawns	(omitted)

E2. Players are free to use the first letter of the name which is commonly used in their own country. In printed matter, iconic representations of the pieces are often used instead of letters, but drawings of pieces may not be used by players when notating a game.

E3. Pawns are not indicated by their first letter, but are recognized by the absence of such a letter.

E4. The eight files (from left to right for White and from right to left for Black) are indicated by the letters, a, b, c, d, e, f, g and h, respectively. Lower case is preferred.

E5. The eight ranks (from bottom to top for White and from top to bottom for Black) are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, respectively. In the initial position the white pieces and pawns are placed on the first and second ranks; the black pieces and pawns on the eighth and seventh ranks.

E6. Each of the sixty four squares is therefore indicated by a unique combination of a letter and a number.

E7. Each move of a piece is indicated by (a) the first letter of the name of the piece in question and (b) the square of arrival. There is no hyphen between (a) and (b).

E8. When a piece makes a capture, an x is inserted between the first letter of the name of the piece in question and the square of arrival. When a pawn makes a capture, not only the square of arrival but also the file of departure must be indicated, followed by an x. In the case of an “en passant” capture, the square of arrival is given as the square on which the capturing pawn finally rests.

E9. If two identical pieces can move to the same square, the piece that is moved is indicated as follows:

(1) If both pieces are on the same rank: by the first letter of the name of the piece, the rank of the square of departure, and the square of arrival.

(2) If both pieces are on the same file: by the first letter of the name of the piece, the rank of the square of departure, and the square of arrival.

(3) If the pieces are on different ranks and files, method (1) is preferred. In the case of capture, an x must be inserted before the square of arrival.

E10. If two pawns can capture the same piece or pawn of the opponent, the pawn that is moved is indicated by the letter of the file of departure, an x, the square of arrival

E11. Special moves

In the case of a pawn promotion, the actual pawn move is indicated, followed immediately by the first letter of the new piece. En passant captures require no special indication.

Kingside castling is indicated by two zeroes separated by a dash: 0-0. Queenside castling is represented by three zeroes separated by dashes: 0-0-0.

Check is indicated by a plus sign (+). Checkmate is indicated by the symbol #.

E12. The offer of a draw is indicated by an equal sign (=).

CHESS EQUIPMENT

Chess Sets and Boards

The preferred chess set has the following specifications:

A board with squares 5 cm. x 5 cm. For scholastic events, coordinates (a-h, 1-8) should be imprinted on the edges of the board.

The pawn should have a base with a width equal to one half the size of the square. Four pawns should fit in the area of one square. Lying on its side diagonally on a square, the height of the rook should be equal to the diagonal of the square.

The size of the bishop and knight vary from equal to the height of the rook, to a sharply ascending height. The king is the tallest piece, though the queen may be quite close in height.

The shape of the pieces should correspond to the Staunton design:



In tournaments where players supply their own equipment, the arbiter decides which of the chess sets is closer in design to the preferred set described above.

Chess Clocks

A chess clock is a timing device which has two timers, one for each player, arranged in such a way that if one player's clock is in motion, the other is not. It is typically a digital device (analog clocks are rapidly disappearing and cannot be used for many modern time controls) which can be programmed by the user in a wide variety of ways to impose time limits on the game. Whatever time control is used, the clock should stop in the event that a player exceeds the time limit and some method of indicating the expiration, such as flashing the digits, signals to players, arbiters and spectators that the time has expired.

The Scoresheet

The scoresheet is an important part of tournament play. The large chess databases of tournament games grow because the recording of games is obligatory at chess tournaments. When the organizers provide scoresheets, these are considered property of the tournament. The scoresheet, which is often customized for a major tournament, especially if sponsored, allows the player to record the following:

The name of the tournament.
Date of the game.
Round of the tournament.
Board number assigned to the game.
Name of each player.
Optionally, the rating and team of each player.
All the moves of the game.
Optionally, the time for each move.